

Waterfalls flow in Crawford Notch, N.H.

By Tim Jones

GATEHOUSE NEWS SERVICE

Spring is the perfect time for viewing New England's waterfalls, and Crawford Notch in the White Mountains of New Hampshire is

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"Waterfall Central." There are at least 13 falls tumbling from the heights within the Notch. Two are visible from the

road; the rest you can get to on hikes of anywhere from a quarter-mile to 2.4 miles.

My fiancée and I recently did an overnight escape to see some of the falls, making our base camp the Appalachian Mountain Club's Highland Center (www.outdoors.org). This is by far the most upscale of the AMC's lodging properties, a modern facility with a choice of accommodations ranging from co-ed bunkrooms to private rooms with private baths (\$35 to \$117 per person – depending on the level of privacy you desire). A family-style dinner and a hearty breakfast are included in the price.

Just east of the Highland Center on Rte. 302, the Flume Cascade and Silver Cascade falls are right beside the road with convenient pullouts for viewing. Both are beautiful in the spring when the melting snow leads to torrents of water descending in long, glittering horsetails through dramatic

cuts in the cliff face.

But we found the best waterfalls require some hiking.

At about 170-feet tall, Arethusa Falls is the highest single-drop waterfall in New Hampshire, and reachable on a moderate, 1.5-mile hike.

The payoff is water that seemingly appears out of nowhere, as if falling from blue sky. It's exquisite.

You can take a little diversion on the way to Arethusa at Bemis Brook Trail to view two lovely, smaller waterfalls, Bemis Brook Falls and Coliseum.

We also hiked eight-tenths of a mile to Gibbs Falls on the Crawford

Path, across 302 from the Highland Center. Although much smaller than Arethusa, this was spectacular as it gushed through a narrow chute into the pool below.

The folks at the Highland Center are experienced hikers and can offer advice on the other treks. Guidebooks and maps are also for sale at the lodge.

For more information, I suggest the book "New England Waterfalls," by Greg Parsons and Kate B. Watson, or visit their Web site at www.newenglandwaterfalls.com.



PHOTO BY TIM JONES

Less than a mile of hiking brings you to Gibbs Falls. In the spring, stop and listen to the deep voice of the falls as they plunge into a pool below.

